

MINUTES: Centerville Township Windmill Ordinance Committee, August 7, 2006

Present: Mark Zemanek, Molly Hyde, Richard Light, Carolyn Weed, Travis Nelson, Gary Cook, Dale Pleva, Richard Kobetz, David Wurm

Absent: Joseph Czerniak

Audience members present: Jim Wichern, Steve Kozelko, Dan Matthies, Jim Rennie, Nancy Keilty, Chris Kropp, Bill Rastetter.

Members of the audience were given opportunities for comments. Mr. Wichern expressed his concerns in regards to additional and larger transmission lines should a large scale electric project be allowed within Centerville Township. Mr. Kozelko has concerns regarding tower height. He commented that in comparison to the height of the cell tower on Noonan's, large windmills would have quite a visual impact. Mr. Kropp feels that large towers would be an eyesore. Mr. Matthies shared a recent experience as a real estate agent who has lost a sale on a large parcel of property within Centerville Twp., because of the possibility that a wind farm company is thinking of locating here.

Mr. Light gave a presentation on the effects of wind turbine generators on the values of homes. We have to look at what we do know and come to our best conclusion. Common sense would tell us that at best there would be no effect on property values. However, a 400' highly visible, noisy tower would affect property values. It is much the same as if a power plant or gas station were to be located near one's property. The REPP report is commonly referred to as a reference in regards to the effects of wind turbines on property values. Mr. Light has analyzed the calculations in the study and has noted the incorrect correlations and inconsistencies and incompleteness of the evaluation methods used. Other sources and studies from the Wind Energy Handbook, the Energy Center of Wisconsin, and Appalachian State University were also reviewed, coming to the conclusion that property values are negatively affected by WTG's, as high as \$25,000 per residence and salability also declines. While a leaseholder can have an economic benefit, it comes at a cost to neighboring residences.

Mr. Kobetz questioned whether or not we should be trying to determine the property values for Centerville Township as that does not belong in the ordinance. Mr. Light said that we should be able to say we considered the topic if someone should ask. Ms. Weed agrees that it is legitimate to look at this also. She quoted the definition of zoning from the Michigan Townships website (as per Michigan laws) as functioning "as a tool to implement the township master plan, to protect natural resources and to protect property values." Mr. Nelson doubts that a township should allow possible uses that would depreciate property. Setbacks are what allow neighbors to protect their property.

View sheds were also addressed. It was stated that there is no particular legal right to a protected view unless someone had purchased a view easement. However, the community's desire for an unchanged view shed is referred to in the master plan.

Ms. Hyde handed out some information on property tax structure within the state, explaining taxable values and state equalized values. Through a conversation with Julie Kronbeem, the Centerville Twp. assessor, she found that taxable values (and thus property taxes) rarely, if ever, decrease. It would take years of decreased property sales data to determine a trend consistent enough to actually decrease property taxes.

The next meeting will be August 24th. The topics will be impacts on the environment.

Respectfully submitted,
Molly Hyde